Export of agricultural produce

*278. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any measures to improve the exports of agricultural produce; if so, how far they are successful in this respect; and

(b) what steps are being taken to ensure the quality of agricultural produce in order to compete in the inter-national market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) In order to increase the exports of agricultural commodities the Government has set up Commodity Boards/Export Promotion Councils which interact with the producers and exporters. Trade Delegations are sent abroad and there is participation in International Fairs. Government has granted Cash Compensatory Support and REP (IMPORT REPLENISHMENT) on various items. The exports of agricultural commodities have shown a steady progress.

(b) The Directorate of Marketing & Inspection and Export Inspection Agencies maintain control over quality.

Kaziranga National Park, Assam

*279. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Kaziranga National Park in Assam has been in a state of gradual diminution in area due to floods and erosion over the years and as a result thereof rare species of animals face extinction in the Park; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take for the protection of this tourist spot of international attraction?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) It is reported that the loss in area due to floods and erosion in the Kaziranga National Park is insignificant and no animals there are threatened with extinction because of this diminution of area of the park.

(b) Steps taken and proposed for the protection of the Kaziranga National Park include:

(i) Raising of ground for making artificial mounds where animals, particularly the smaller mammals can seek shelter during floods;

(ii) Removal of water hyacinth and de-silting of water ponds (beels) to improve their water retention capacity.

(iii) Increased deployment of protection staff with provision for jeeps, motorboats, arms and wireless equipment.

(iv) Central assistance released for the development of the Kaziranga National Park in VI Plan and so far in VII Plan is Rs. 16.08 lakhs and Rs. 92.88 lakhs respectively.

(v) Implementation of the Rs. 5.00 crore Centrally Sponsored "Rhinow Conservation" Scheme in Kaziranga National Park since 1986-87 and continued Central financial assistance for the development of the park during VII Plan.

(vi) Formulation of a proposal to extend the existing National Park area of 430 sq. kms. by addition of another about 450 sq. kms.

Allocation of fund for the Development of Zoological Park and Lion Safari in Punjab

*280. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have allocated any fund for the development of the M. M. Choudhary Zoological Park and the Lion Safari at Chhat Bir in Punjab; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?